

REMARKS

Claims 2-31 are pending in the application. Claims 2-31 are rejected. No claims are amended with this Reply.

Reply to the Examiner's Advisory Action

The Examiner has maintained his rejection of Claims 2-31. Specifically, the Examiner states in item 5 of the Action –

The . . . affidavit . . . or . . . request for reconsideration has been considered but does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because: Claims 13, 19 and 22 are not commensurate with the arguments. The claims do not state that the modified degraded starch is to the extent that the gel point temperature is lower than the uninhibited starch to any specific degree by "unique combination of gegradation [sic, degradation] and crosslinking within a specified range" (page 8 of Applicant's Remarks) to produce improved paper strength without particle size range.

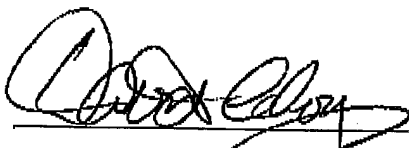
Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's maintained rejection for the following reasons.

Applicants have previously shown that neither Neale nor Kightlinger teach or suggest modified degraded starches that have been crosslinked "with an inhibition agent in an amount of about 0.001% to about 0.05% by weight of dry starch" (present independent claims 13, 19 and 22). As shown by Applicants, modified degraded starches crosslinked within this claimed range result in a starch wherein the gel point temperature is lower than the uninhibited starch. (See p. 8 of Applicants' 17 June 2003 Reply with reference to the Tsai Declaration therein – "The data found in [the Tsai] Declaration clearly shows that both a nondegraded modified starch (Starch 3, as exemplified in Neale with the exception being the amount of crosslinker) and a degraded starch (Starch 2 as presently claimed), **when inhibited in the amount claimed**, do NOT have a gel point temperature range greater than the unmodified starch (Starch 1)" (emphasis added).)

Accordingly, by claiming this specified range of inhibition agent, which is not taught or suggested by any of the art cited, the claims do indeed "state that the modified degraded starch is to the extent that the gel point temperature is lower than the uninhibited starch to any specific degree by 'unique combination of [degradation] and crosslinking within a specified range' [] to produce improved paper strength without particle size range".

It is believed that these further remarks overcome the Examiner's rejection of claims 2-31 as amended as being unpatentable over Neale in view of Kightlinger under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Allowance of the claims is believed to be in order, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

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